

MOTHERHOOD AND THE SAFE TIME SIMPLIFIED. By J. Lyle Cameron, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.A.C.S., F.R.C.O.G. (Pp. 15. 9d.) Edinburgh and London : E. and S. Livingstone Ltd.

For those who, on grounds of religious dogma or personal preference, wish to avoid mechanical or chemical contraception, this is a brief and lucid pamphlet on the safe period. Nine short pages of print, plus two diagrams, should not be beyond the capacity of the ordinary couple to understand. What may be beyond their powers is the long ordeal of ascertaining any one woman's ovulation time by temperature recordings with two thermometers, one in the mouth and the other in the vagina. A supplementary method is that of watching for "The Time of Discomfort Tenderness and Distention" that in many individuals signalises the period of ovulation. Although this, in general, also constitutes the period of greatest natural desire, the writer is emphatic that the avoidance of this time permits marital relations that are natural and normal in every way. This is claiming too much for at least one member of the sexual partnership.

With these reservations, this leaflet can be recommended unhesitatingly to patients desiring information on this method of birth control. W. R. S.

CHILDBIRTH—THEORY AND PRACTICAL TRAINING. By Marjorie F. Chappell, D.N.(Lond.), S.R.N., C.S.P., S.C.M., H.V.Cert. (Pp. viii + 128; figs. 35. 7s. 6d.) Edinburgh and London : E. and S. Livingstone, 1954.

For some years now the slogan "Natural Childbirth" has been increasingly heard. This began with a movement to "brainwash" expectant mothers with the object of removing fears founded on faulty tradition or education and held by the advocates of natural childbirth to result in mental and physical tension culminating in disordered or painful uterine action. These had created a demand for painless childbirth, hence fashionable obstetric regimes of twilight sleep and other forms of analgesics or amnesia—in other words unnatural childbirth.

We have now reached a time when some feel that the so-called method of natural childbirth has passed into a new and different phase of interference with nature. The method appears to be in danger of becoming the master and not the servant of the practitioner. School-leavers are given talks on the subject. Young couples enquire about it from those to whom they look for premarital instruction. Expectant mothers are instructed in what the title of this book calls the theory of childbirth. They are put through a series of exercises which culminates in a rehearsal of labour. Mother clubs are formed, and prenatal visits to the wards and delivery rooms are organised for their benefit. Fathers, too, are now being introduced to some of this prenatal instruction with, perhaps, more justification. Whatever these activities may accomplish, they are quite incapable of fulfilling all the claims made for them in this book. All this constitutes a current fashion, and assuredly does help the expectant mother, though not always in the manner and degree described, or for the reasons given.

This book is primarily for the instructor, who it is assumed is already familiar with the work and writings of the leading advocates of the method. It breaks up the course of combined instruction and exercises into a graduated series of eight sessions. It should be understandable by the intelligent individual who cannot get group instruction, despite occasional obscurities of verbal construction. The illustrations are few and simple. W. R. S.

CHEMOTHERAPY IN THE TREATMENT OF TUBERCULOSIS: Papers read at a Tuberculosis Educational Institute Refresher Course at Cambridge, 1953. (Pp. 60. 5s.) London : National Association for Prevention of Tuberculosis, 1954.

SOME papers of more than passing interest are presented, but in general the delay of over a year in publication is regrettable, and scarcely justified in such a production.